



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT  
PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

**FOSTERING RIGHT RELATIONSHIP:  
ECCT, INDIGENOUS EPISCOPALIANS AND OUR  
INDIGENOUS NEIGHBORS**

**Submitted by:** The Rev. Bob Bergner, The Rev. Anne Fraley, The Rev. Joan Phelps, The Rev. Ron Kolanowski, The Rev. Ron Steed, The Rev. Tara Shepley, The Rev. Diana Rogers, The Rev. James Speer, The Rev. Mark Lingle, Anne Rowthorn, PhD, The Rev. Sharia Molegoda, R.J. Foster, Eileen Hynes, Margery B, Irish, Joan Carty, Patricia Lyden, James R. Hawkins

RESOLVED, that The Episcopal Church in Connecticut in its 237th Convention acknowledge that we live, work, and worship on the ancestral land of Indigenous Peoples; and make public statements that acknowledge such in an appropriate manner whenever possible; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut educate ourselves regarding past and present relationships and interactions with Indigenous People in our midst and with our Indigenous neighbors; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut begin to explore and implement appropriate ways to foster right relationship with Indigenous Episcopalians and with our Indigenous neighbors; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut work with indigenous people and communities to designate one Sunday each year—and provide suitable worship resources for that day—to honor the Indigenous People of our state and nation, both those who are members of our Episcopal family and those who are not, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention direct the Mission Council to create and appoint a Task Force on Relationships with Indigenous People with members recruited by the co-sponsors of this resolution and approved by the Mission Council. Said Task Force will be charged with supporting ECCT in the work required by this resolution.

**Explanation:** The history of interaction between Europeans and their descendants and the Indigenous People of the land now called Connecticut--like the history of the entire United States--is rife with the violent and murderous destruction of communities, land theft, coerced assimilation, etc. Scars of these abusive interactions are borne even today by Indigenous People of this state and by us all. It is time to reach out to the Indigenous People of ECCT and to our Indigenous neighbors, to acknowledge their presence, to recognize past--and possibly present--wrongs committed against them, and to ask, "Walking together, how can we make things right?"



**How does this resolution further God’s Mission of restoration and reconciliation with all of creation?** The violent history of the colonization of Southern New England and its aftermath leaves an inevitable, yet often unrecognized, rift in God's family--a family that includes Indigenous Peoples as well as people of European descent and descendants of all nations of the world. If, together, we are to move forward into a healthier, more sustainable future, we must recognize and acknowledge wrongs that have been committed in the past and reach out to one another to build mutually supportive community in the present. As some of us have been learning, there are Indigenous members of our ECCT community who have only recently and hesitantly publicly claimed their Native background. Based on personal experience and the experience of their ancestors, they have understandably feared discrimination and ridicule even from their parish families. Others among our Indigenous neighbors keep a distrustful distance from the Church in general--again, a distrust that is understandable given the history of interaction between the Church and Indigenous People here in what we now call Connecticut and throughout our nation. God's Kingdom cannot be built among people who distrust, dismiss and/or discriminate against each other. God's creation can only be restored and reconciled when we listen to and learn from each other and when we begin to walk together. Let's open our ears and hearts to the Indigenous People around and amongst us and take our first steps together on the road to right relationship.

**Statement of requirements to implement the resolution:**

1. The cost of implementation of this resolution may vary as the work required becomes clearer. To begin, the Task Force would ask for a grant of \$2500 from ECCT to cover the cost of communication materials; workshop registration; honoraria for guest speakers; and travel to museums, archeological sites and special events
2. The implementation of this resolution will be a long term undertaking. The work and relationships outlined in the resolution will continue to grow and deepen and will bear rich fruit over time. However, even the longest project unfolds in shorter stages. Thus, the Task Force will report back to ECCT Convention in one year’s time to present work accomplished and to assess next steps moving forward.